

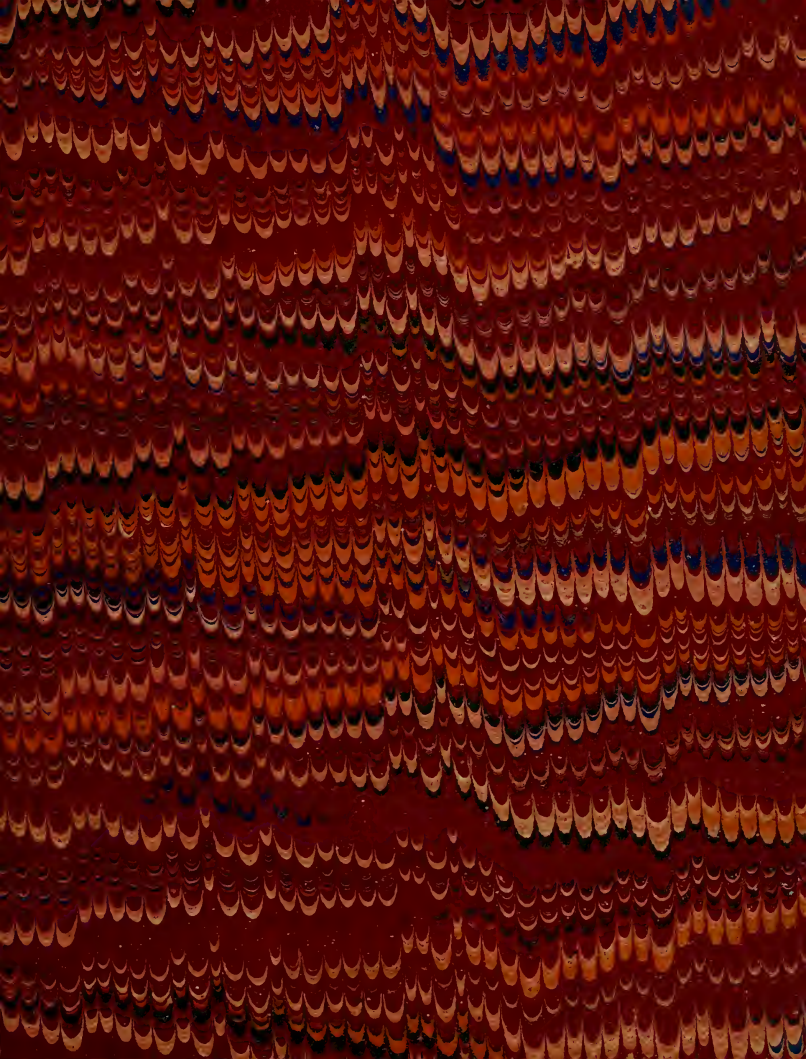


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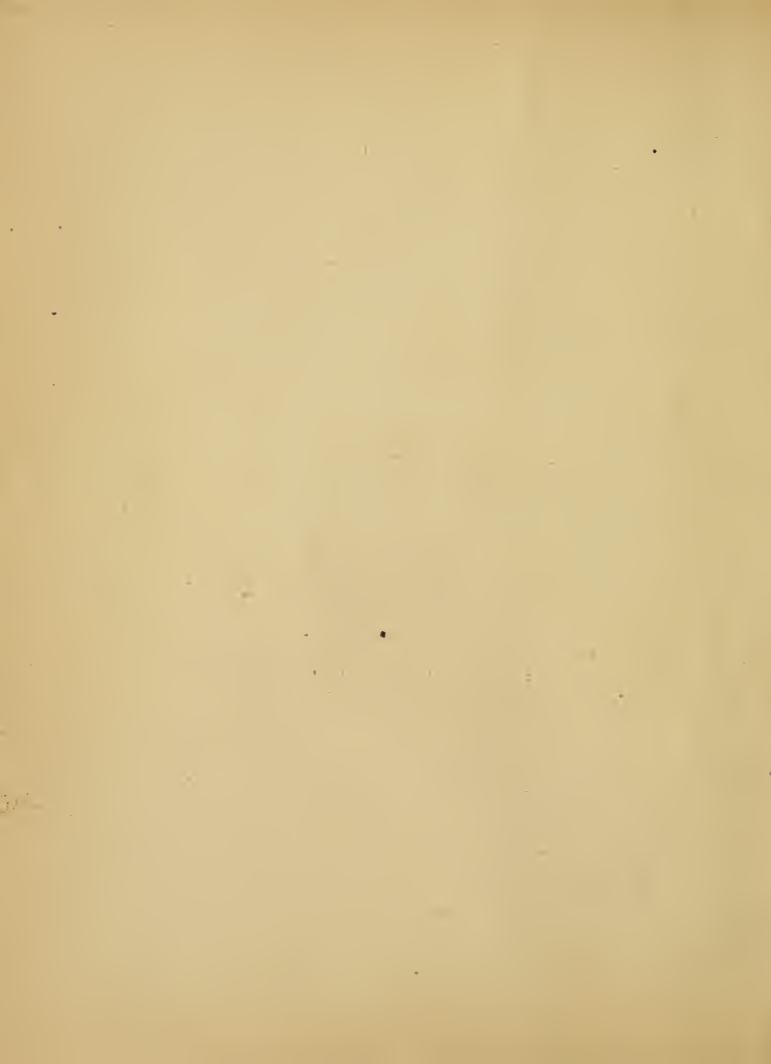
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A Voyage with Death,
And Other Poems.

BY ADAIR WELCKER.



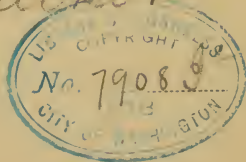


VOYAGE WITH DEATH,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

By Adair Welcker



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[1878]

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PREFACE.

THE following short poems are submitted to the world. With me they are Alpha ; may the verdict of that world not make them Omega.

June 6, 1878.

ADAIR WELCKER.

a

A VOYAGE WITH DEATH.



I LOVED her then, with such a deep pure love
As few can love, but they of heaven above ;
The passing years seemed clouds, filled with sunlight,
Youth's years rolled by, clouds hued with coming night,
For sadness, then, had crept in on the heart;
We saw the time when men said we must part;
Like a dark night, a night wrought of deep sadness,
We saw 'twould come, and hide our day-like gladness.

Two years had passed; and I must leave my home;
A wanderer, in some far land to roam.

Afar from home, I sat me by the sea,
And watched the clouds come rolling ceaselessly;
And in my heart, that sadly beat, and lowly,
There ceaseless rolled, dark waves of melancholy.
I raised my eyes, and looked out on the ocean,
Whose myriad whitecaps rolled in sunlit motion.
I heard the gull scream shrill, and drearily,
And slow fly on, with wings flapped wearily;
And then I wished that thoughts, which rose in me,
On wings of sight, could fly across that sea.
“Perhaps this heart—this saddened heart of mine—
It hath some strange, some unseen hidden line—
A something more than thought, and more divine,
That beareth an emotion brought from thine—
From thy heart, Helen, thou sweet love of mine.”

That night upon the deep and darkened water
A bark moved on, and seemed wild ocean's daughter

Nursed by the wave. The stars drove off the gloom,
(Candles that lit night's dark walls round the room)
And on we sailed; and then upon the shore,
The loose rocks, rattling, made a gentle roar,
As on I moved, slipping from side to side;
Still on I moved, again to see my bride.

'Twas midnight's hour. I saw the candle light
Come creeping forth, to bathe within the night.
Around the window grew the creeping flower;
And through its leaves I saw the light that hour.
The door swung wide, the father's face wore gloom
"I saw a light," I said, "in Helen's room"—
"She dies," he cried, with deep, and smothered cry.
"My Helen dies? Ah, Helen cannot die!"
I sought my loved one's room, and all was still.
"Ah, look on me, but once look, if you will,"
I cried; she turned that lovely face to me;

Ah pale, so pale, and worn it seemed to be.
Those cheeks, where once life's roses wild had grown,
Had lost them now; Death called the flowers his own.
"Thou wilt not die!" I cried, "thou wilt not die!"
"And wilt thou grieve?" she said, and in her eye—
In that wild, burning eye, a tear arose.
I heard the ticking clock mark time that flows;
Like some great engine, ticking in the air,
It seemed; for death-like stillness reigned there.
I saw the candles burn, nor were they moved,
When she did groan, the lovely one I loved;
But steadily burned on, with horrid steadiness;
While my wild heart did wilder beat with readiness.
And then she died—the one I'd loved for years;
Was it for this I'd loved her? And then my tears,
Mixed with a liquid called despair, o'erflowed.
In sadness, then, I walked some lonely road.

In white they laid her in a darkened room;
Where oft had rung the merry laugh was gloom.
The blinds drawn down, the sun was shut away—
Ah, sadly we walked forth in the broad day,
To gather lillies, which in that dark place
Lay whiter on her breast, than her white face.
On tip-toe, then, we moved about the bed
Of my Helen—my Helen that was dead.

* * * * *

One night, alone, I sat before the fire;
The flame, above the coal; the smoke rose higher;
And long I watched—the flickering candle died;
And as it died, methought the darkness sighed.
The fire wore on, till all in ashes lay,
And when the spark—the last spark died away,
Methought I heard a whisper, then a voice
Said, “Woulds’t thou, man, in deeper life rejoice?
And woulds’t thou live, in life where thou might’st see

Thy bride that's dead? then come, be led by me."
I saw a form; 'twas dark—it filled the room;
The night seemed daylight, to its hue of gloom;
And it had wings, as dark as the deep night
In some far world, that never knew sun's light.
Like man's the form; but then his deep, dark eye
Was like a ball of night in day's bright sky;
And yet his face beamed kind—so kind on me,
The whole world's smile seemed gathered there to be.
"I'm Death, and wilt thou come with me?" he said.
"Take thou my hand; by thee I will be led."
And answering thus, I gave to death my hand;
And then I saw, far leading from earth-land,
A river through the air—a strange, strange river;
Through beds of clouds, it flowing seemed forever.
That river sparkled like the sunbeam's light;
Yet softness mingled with its surface bright.
Fast to that waveless shore a boat was tied.

That boat was painted o'er with night. Its side
Had on the words: "Joy forever, and ever."
Of shadows made, was the boat on the river.
There was no oar, nor sail, the winds of death,
That o'er the earth do breathe their stilling breath,
Did catch our prow, and drag us slowly on;
But time seemed short—a moment earth was gone.
And I seemed sleeping, till we reached that shore,
A sleep so deep, that all my sleep before
Did gather in one mighty sleep. The boat,
Wrought of the shadows, that are dead, did float
And bear us on. And now methought the sky
Did change, and have a darker hue, on high.
The haze of night crept o'er, around the river.
Still on we moved, nor had our boat stopped ever.
And now I saw, ascending and descending
The river, angels come, and far extending
I saw their boats, as white as some sea shell,

In which the morning sun's first ray doth dwell.
And now, from cloud to cloud above,
Sweet music doth, in sounding lightning rove.
And ah, this music seemed so sweet to me,
'Twas like the soul of all lost melody.
And then I thought, these angels who do move
Toward earth, in their white boats, seek those they
 love,
To guard them secretly. For fiends do throw
At them, darts dipped in hell's hot sins below,
Wrought by hell's fiends. Now Death, that spirit dark,
Cried, "look far in the sky." And I did mark
A distant star. "It is a star," he said,
"And in that star is hell;" then it grew red.
The night-like clouds, that overhead did roll,
Then darker grew; and I saw through the whole,
As I had seen the sun through a dark glass,
In this red ball oft pass, and then re-pass,

Some half seen forms, far through the fiery light,
That made their atmosphere. Then clouds, like night,
Closed o'er above, and hell behind fell far,
And to the eye, grew but a silver star.

The days of sleep were o'er; no sleep I needed;
There was no night; earth's night passed on unheeded.
Another star grew near, as we passed on.

"From here, at night," said Death, "when sinks the
sun,

A world of unseen rays toward earth do flow,
Which, resting on the sleeper's brow below,
Produce sweet dreams. From here doth gentle sleep,
In smoke-like flakes, fall through night's stillness deep.
And here our dark boat stops; here on this shore,
All they have stood, that went with me before."

"My Helen, then, hath once been here with thee?"

"That maiden stood, where thou dost stand, with me."

Round yon dark rocks I led her to my home,

By this same path I'll lead thee with me—come.”
He took my hand. The river to my eye
Was lost; with boats forever gliding by.

I saw his home, a cavern deep, and dark;
For in its depth was glowing many a spark—
The burning years of those that lived on earth.
And new lights blazed, when man below had birth;
And old flames ceased, when man below was dead.
“Come on with me, still further on,” Death said.
It grew less dark; and less, as we drew nearer;
Those far-off lights, and pale, grew brighter, clearer.
And then methought that some did flickering burn,
And some burned steadily, I could discern.
“See here my garden is,” said Death to me;
“Look on those flowers—flowers of eternity.
Flowers of thought are they, the gentle thought,
Born in the human heart, in flowers is wrought.

And when my passengers have passed to heaven,
By flowers, to me, remembrances are given.
On earth the gentle, pitying glance hath power,
To leave a hue upon that kind one's flower.
And then the dark and angry thought doth stain
Some flower of mine—it ne'er grows white again.
And when they're gone beyond, if I see here
A stained flower—I see it with a tear.
This deep red flower," he said, "doth mark how one
Through martyr death, long years ago, hath gone;
Who stood the burning fire; then took my hand,
And left earth's cruel ones for heaven's kind band.
Ah sweet, sweet flowers; ye flowers that never die,
But bloom, for me, the long eternity.
But let us rest not longer here." Then on
The dark boat moved—that home of death was gone.

The million stars we windingly moved through;

And other worlds did strangely strike the view;
And beings strange, upon those worlds were seen.
Great clouds of fire, bound round with dunnest smoke,
Were drawn o'erhead, and down in showers broke
That rent the darkened clouds that hung between.
Winged demons, that were clothed in hell's array,
Thus strove to stop our steady, silent way.
They harmed us not, and onward still we moved,
Towards that fair place—the home of Him we loved.

And beings joined us from another fold.
Still other streams oft into our stream rolled.
Those deep, dark clouds, that hung above, were gone;
And o'er a stream of gold, we floated on;
A half-heard music trembled in the air,
And angels walked, upon the waters there;
And there was one, among that heavenly band,
That greeted me, and pointed to a land,

Far, far ahead, where we should meet again.
I urged my dark guide on, but urged in vain.
Beneath white clouds, we rested on a shore,
And there I left my guide forevermore.

MEMORÆ.



ADREAM is left, and childhood's home is gone;
The cruel robber, years, the deed have done;
And left a dream—a place where fancies come,
And rear an airy memory of a home.
Ah, sunny time! I see thee now through years
That float away on cloudy mists of tears;
I see thee now, as when a child I slept,
Till curious sunbeams 'neath my eye-lids crept;
And waked, I heard my mother's voice below
Cry, "Wake, my child, the sun rose hours ago!"

That happy time; how blithe the young heart then;
The heart will never be as blithe again;

Then every rose breathed sweetness on the air,
And in bird songs were drowned our thoughts of care.
How long we angled in the clear cool stream,
Where finny backs rebuffed the sun's warm beam ;
At night were then our dreams so pure, so bright,
That fairy tho'ts wove round them moonbeams light ;
While others paint (their paint a liquid star)
Scenes on our dreams of other worlds afar,
No sneering word then gave that stinging pain,
That piercing in, but years drive out again ;
No sin had then crept in upon the heart,
And written devils' thoughts on every part.

Ah, sweet, sweet childhood ! well I miss thee now—
Thou hadst a heart—man has a cold stern brow ;
And though years hold me with their iron chain,
With madman strength I'd tear the chain in twain,
And be a child, but once a child again !

Alas these thoughts—these dreary thoughts—are vain;
And I must seek, in halls of memory,
A dream that's left; all, now, that's left to me.

How long we sought the uncaught butterfly,
As men seek pleasure (vision of the sky);
Or laughing, played in fields of sunbrowned hay,
Till worn, at night, all homeward took their way,
A child we lay upon some hillock green,
And watched the clouds roll by in silver sheen;
Or sat by streams, where gentle waters ran
And dreamed of peace, as childhood dreaming can.
Ah, with what joy we heard the wild birds song,
That mingled with the waves that rolled along,
And saw small ships move down that tiny deep,
As heavenly thoughts moved o'er our nightly sleep;
While winds breathed thro' the trees a soothing tone,
And on the banks we slept, till day was gone.

And then at night, around the roaring fire,
Where pine logs blazed, and crackling blazed up higher;
And loud the wind howled through the dark without,
Our *childish* tears arose for those about,
That in the tempest, starving, prayed for fire,
A crust of bread, a roof, their sole desire,
A bright thought came, the heart grew lighter then,
We would grow rich, and buy them homes, when men
Our parents told of days then long passed by,
Of battles fought—of death—of victory;
Of that wild time, when England was our foe,
And of the band that braved the winter's snow—
Ah then the ear, so keen, still keener grew,
We'd buy a sword, and be a soldier too!

And then each child came at the father's call,
Rose on a stool, and there addrest them all;
Told how "tall oaks from little acorns grow;"

About Demosthenes, and Cicero ;
Applauded then, the heart beat wild and high,
As conquerer hearts beat o'er a victory.
On winter's nights 'twas sweet to hear the fall
Of rain upon the roof, against the wall,
Or snow, that softly seemed from heaven to creep
While weight of lighter thoughts pressed us to sleep;
When older grown, we sought the far off school,
And learned there best to hate a tyrant's rule ;
How through long hours, those many sunny days,
We watched the birds, playing on high their plays ;
And wished that we, like them, winged birds could be,
Dwellers of air, where aught that lived was free.
And then, upon the sunny Sabbath morn,
When stillness from the noisy week was born,
In Sunday suits, we walked through meadows green
Till through tall oaks, the church's spire was seen,
And ah ! how sweet, when all the church was choir,

To hear them sing, inspired with holy fire ;
How rang their tone, till o'er the hill and vale,
Some wanderer heard it, on the morning's gale.
And when, at last, the sermons end would come,
And all, in groups, were wandering toward home ;
The father led us o'er each field and hill,
And taught, the while, the Heavenly Father's will ;
Then tired, at last, we rested on some stone,
Where buttercups in crevices had grown,
And watched the earth, spread o'er with varied flowers
Whose sweetness memory mingles with those hours.
These joys are past ; these visions have no home,
Poor wanderers, to memory's door they come,
And gape at one, changed by the changing years,
Then turn away, and flee, to hide their tears.

NAMELESS HERE FOREVERMORE.



SEE the years, like waves, roll back
Upon time's dreary ocean ;
Waves that farther, farther move,
With ceaseless, steady motion.

Breaking upon the dark waves crest,
Roll on those happy hours,
When I loved thee thou dark-eyed one,
Where bloomed Astoria's flowers.

How oft we wandered on some path,
While dark trees waved above,
And threw a shade, upon thy face,
Too sweet for sunbeam's love.

Or wandered by Columbia's bank,
When stars had ceased their dreaming,
Awakened by the gathering night—
Were down upon us beaming.

Then often wildly beat this heart,
When glanced thy eye down on me ;
Ah, well I knew, with that sweet glance,
Fell rays of love upon me !

And when I said the gentle word,
And took thy hand in mine—
But ah, tis past ! forever past,
That answering look of thine.

Roll on, ye dark, and dreary years !
Roll swiftly, let me die ;
Deep sadness shrouds this heart around ;
Hot tears burn in the eye.

For once I saw her bright face grow
So thin, so thin and pale ;
And once I saw spread o'er her eye
A glaze—of death the veil.

Ah ! how I watched, with breaking heart,
That cheek so thin and white,
I kissed her cheeks—she never knew ;
Her eyes had lost their light.

Those kind dark eyes had lost their light,
'Twas gone, yes gone forever—
'Twas long ago, but burning thoughts
Have left my torn heart never.

And oft I wander o'er the path,
To step where she hath stepped ;
But in the tracks, flowers oft have grown,
And snowflakes there have slept.

And oft I seek the same old seat,
Where we have sat together,
But years have worn the seat away,
And cruel winter weather.

And I have listened to the birds,
That sing their wildwood lays,
To see, if now, they ever sing
The songs sung in those days.

But when I listen, their wild songs
Upon the heart seem flowing,
Like snow-flakes, freezing all the earth,
In winter when its snowing.

But cease thou now, my saddened soul,
These weary thoughts repeating;
For soon times wave's shall o'er thee roll,
In death the heart stop beating.

THE FOREST FIRE.



DARK night came down, from out the deep blue
heaven,

And sternly frowned upon the lingering day,
Then day, by fear, from off the earth was driven,
And o'er the world the night assumed her sway.
Upon each hill there blushed a sunset cloud,
That blushed—that died—and night became its
shroud.

The tall black trees, like shadows touched the sky
Of prison bars, that prisoned in the day.
Some burning planet dropped its sparks on high ;
Night's stars were formed, that cast below their ray.
The moon came out ; below upon the earth

A thousand shades, from her sweet ray, had birth.
A hunter bold rides by upon his steed—
A gallant steed ; borne of the prarie breed.
And who is he ? the world has never known,
Born in the forest—there to manhood grown ;
The high dark mountain looked and saw his birth,
The lonely valleys heard his wail of sorrow.
The sun he saw sink o'er the western earth ;
And watched its rising bring another morrow ;
Nor thought, nor cared, if kings o'er earth might
 reign ;
King of himself, and nature's broad domain ;
Long taught to roam the wild home God had given,
He feared naught living, 'neath the deep blue heaven.

Beside him rode a maid, whose eye of light,
Was like a star within a fairy night.
How gallantly her steed bore her along !

And proudly moved, with step grown bold, and strong.
In maiden fear was heard her sweet voice there,
For it was dark, and night was everywhere.
The big trees waked, to hear its gentle tone,
And echoes repeat it when the sound has flown.
Slowly they ride, along the winding trail,
O'er trees blown down, by some wild winter's gale ;
The while the wind, that from the Eastern seas
Has lost itself, here in these forest trees,
Is heard to sigh, and moan, for its far home,
And call sea winds to help—they never come !
The bat, to-night, hath gained her liberty,
And swiftly darts across, from tree, to tree ;
Poor thing ! the sun will chain the ground with light
Again, when dies the darkness of the night.

Ah, note ye now how sweet that maiden's smile ?
Methinks night winds do bear it off the while,

And give it to some lonely prairie flower,
That then blooms sweeter, till its dying hour !

'Tis darker now, and by the pale moon's gleaming,
Those fallen trees are like dark monsters seeming.
The lovers talk ; and that sweet maid asks why
She hears low rumbling, in the distant sky ?
He hears it not—" Perhaps it is the wind,
That drearily waves through the limbs behind
And seeks to touch, and kiss thy gentle brow,
With lips cooled by some far off mountain snow.
Ah Helen, now, within thy deep dark eye,
I see a star of heaven, reflected lie ;
And was it driven far from its home on high,
And there hath found a kinder, gentler sky.
And more, it seems to me, that love has done,
Hath in thy eye e'en raised his kingly throne."
[And conquers thee, thou fearless man, this hour ;

That dark eye's glance—ah well Love knows its power.]

‘ But hush,” she said, “ the sound I hear again.”

The wild steeds snuff the air, and strain the rein,

Now, through the trees, the distant sky's grown red:—

A prarie fire, upon nights clouds of lead.

Fear has grown white, upon that maiden's face,

Love's left his throne, and fear has ta'en his place ;

For now is brought down, on the rising wind,

A trembling roar—it leaves a fire behind.

Another breath brings down a louder roar ;

Deep—dull—death's messenger, it moves before.

Each looks to each, and death's writ in each eye.

The steeds draw near, in fearful sympathy,

And tremble while those lovers each embrace.

How paleness now creeps o'er that fair one's face,

And by the light, thrown from yon glowing sky,

I see her eye, in prayer, turned up on high.

“The forest burns ! come, Helen, let us flee,
This night with Death we race, our enemy.”
They ride—the spur sinks deep into each steed.
Forward they dash, 'tis well, they now have need !
A forest burns ! the wild flames flashing high,
Blind the bright stars that watched in night's dark sky.
The sighing breeze these hours have made a gale,
And loud the trembling pine trees sigh, and wail ;
Still on they race—the wind howls on before ;
Still on they race—behind the wild flames roar.
The rising embers seek the sky and burn ;
The moon seems flamed, ere earthward they return.
The night, that filled the sky, is burnt ; till day
Seems o'er the earth. The wild flames far away
Look near. The birds, that waken with a cry,
Leave their warm nests, and flutter in the sky.
The panther, too, has left his forest home
To those wild flames, that flashing, onward come.

The birds, the beasts, before the red flames fly,
All joined, by fear, in one vast company.

See now !—he falls !—the maiden's horse is dead ;
The living coals, to-night, shall be his bed.
And see ! the other steed drives wildly on,
No hand can check his speed,—and he is gone !
That hunter now, hath left his love behind,
But left not long—he sprang ! and from the ground
He rose ; o'er him, the red sky whirled around,
Backward he turns—back toward that fiery sea,
And sees sweet Helen, there, lie lifelessly !
And is she dead ? No ; by the fiery light,
Her wild eye moves ; sweet Helen lives this night.
Onward again ; he lifts her in his arms
And thinks on her, nor hears the night's alarms ;
He sees them not—those beasts that now fly by him,
Nor sees he, yet, the dead ones falling nigh him ;

Still hurries on, and strives to save his bride ;
Still hurries on, with that wild living tide.

Roar, roar, one steady roar—a hellish sound
'Tis grown. The trees come crashing to the ground,
And falling, forked flames glow in the air—
A crash—the blazing coals fly everywhere.
And still the billowy fire rolls o'er and o'er,
And seems to break upon yon spangled shore.

His steps grow weak, yet with determined eye,
Once more he strives to gain the victory,
Ah, will yon lurid stars by these flames melt ?
Oh, would the far off stars but pity felt,
And wept the fire away. Ah, note his brow !
It paler grows ; death's mark is on it now.
He falls at last ! and falling by his side,
She lies in sleep—the sleep of death—his bride.

All, all alone, the beasts have left them there,
They sleep alone, while thunders rend the air.
Wild roars the fire!—and yet it roars not deep,
As once it roared. Still through it all they sleep!
And now it sinks; the flames flash out no longer;
The ashes cool—in stillness death's grown stronger.
The wind has ceased. The cinders rising slow
Reach the dark sky, and but a moment glow.
'Tis o'er, at last; this scene of death and light;
The hours drag o'er a robe of crape—the night.

LENONA, THE INDIAN CHIEFTAIN'S DAUGHTER.



THE red sun was rising, and far in the west,
The last star was sinking, to day-dreams, and rest;
The wild bird was singing his song of the morning;
His audience the dew-drops, the tall trees adorning.
A river was winding the woodland around,
And across its bright surface, there danced a sweet
sound;

'Twas the voice of a maiden that rang o'er the water;
The voice of Lenona, the dark chieftain's daughter.
And where is her father, the dark chieftain gone?
To hunt, with his warriors, he went at the dawn.
And why rings that maid's voice, the bright river over?

To call the young chieftain, from childhood her lover.
He comes, and his bark boat glides swift through the
water ;

And he clasps her, his loved one, the dark chieftain's
daughter.

Swift onward they move now, adown the bright
stream,

And the paddle reflects, as it turns the sun's beam.

The chieftain returning, seeks far for his child,

Nor in the hut finds her, nor in the woods wild.

His warriors are called. "To the boat on the river!

And onward," he cries, "make every endeavor."

The canoe now flies onward, and many a white wave,

At the bow is born brightly, and astern finds its grave.

A scull, at the boat's bow, looks out o'er the water ;

In the stern, the dark chieftain looks out for his
daughter.

Around a far point, now he sees their boat turning;

That chief's brow is calm, but his wild heart is burning.

"Now strain every nerve, my men, each of you!

Dash onward," he cried, "the prey is in view."

The white waves roll heavy beneath her sharp prow;

The distance decreases between the boats, now;

The maiden's black eye—see it gleams fearfully,

As she cries to her lover, his own life to save,

And jumps in the river, and sinks silently,

And around her sad face rolls, circling, a wave.

The boat, now made lighter, still swifter on flew;

And the white spray, from off her bow, gallantly
threw;

But the arm of the rower grew nerveless and weak;

While the flush of resolve, came slow o'er his cheek—

He jumped in the wave, and he rose never more;

While his boat floated on, and behind it his oar.

The chief's boat hath stopped, but o'er his dark face

There is not, there comes not, of sadness a trace.
But the tears of the man, with the stars of the night,
In anguish arose, when the sun hid his light;
Then one cry rolled out piercingly, far o'er the water—
The cry of that father, bereft of his daughter.

THOUGHTS AT MIDNIGHT.



THIS midnight now ; the passing hour
Steals over those bound by dream power,
A whole world sleeps ! should beings strange,
From some far world, down earthward range,
Arrayed for war ; a world they'd take—
A world bound down, in chains of sleep.
Blaze on ye stars ! your bright light make
To pierce through night's soft darkness deep,
And show, with light, her hiding gloom.
Ye stars ! and are ye "flowers" that bloom
Upon an airy soil of night ?
Or "midnight lamps" that cast their light
Along the winding road to heaven ?

Do angels light ye, every even,
That Death may see to lead along,
To heaven, his dark, and silent throng?

A watch-dog's bark sounds through the air,
And stirs the airy stillness there;
Some being stirs!—a candle's flame
Now mocks the stars—to die in shame.
Sweet sleep, that steals in on the mind,
And shuts the eye-lid gate behind;
Then sits beside, the sickened brain
To nurse, till all is well again.
Sweet child of night! thy dreams are given.
Methinks, as minatures of heaven
The beggar has his dreams at night;
His poor, thin fare; his eyes so bright,
(Eyes lit by hunger's burning fire)
In cool dreams quench their glowing ire.

Sweet sleep ! thou rear'st him up a throne,
In magic dreams a king he's grown.

A king, in day oppressed with thought,
Sleeps' servant, Dream, a cot has brought,
And placed it by a running stream,
Where waving trees kiss the sun's beam.
The honeysuckle climbs the wall,
And from its branches bird's songs fall.
Within, his wife doth hum her song,
In happiness, the morn along,
His children play upon the grass—
'Tis thus, in dreams, a king's hours pass.
The felon dreams ; again a child,
He strays afar, 'mid flowers wild ;
With comrades climbs some forest tree,
And feels a child, at liberty.
No iron bars can hold his dreams ;

In wandering thought himself he deems
In childhood's crib. He lies asleep,
And wakes ; to see his mother weep,
While bending o'er him, tears of love.
Ah ! sleep doth make his wild heart move.

The broken-hearted one, that's dying,
Is well, while 'neath the midnight lying
All, all is still. The weary steed,
That lives a death, a life doth lead
While roving in soft clouds of sleep.
Far in the sky, in darkness deep,
Each star, (an angel's eye that gleams)
Is watching o'er these midnight dreams.

ONLY A LITTLE CROSS.



WHILE wandering through the mountains in British Columbia, some miners, then on their way to Carriboo, came across a little grave covered with snow. At one end of the mound was a rough wooden cross, with no inscription or name upon it. Hearing one of the miners tell about their discovery, the following lines were suggested :—

Only a little cross, far and alone ;
Far from a human home, winds one by one
Bring down the soft white snow, cov'ring his home,
Cov'ring his lonely home, snows come.
Only the lonely wolf steals to the grave ;
And his tracks die away, while the winds rave.
And his home ; where is it ? look to the cross—

It is gone, worn by years. What is the loss ?
Was he a nobleman, beggar, or king ?
Learn from the dreary winds, round whispering !
And had he a father, a mother to mourn ?
A sister, or brother, away from him torn ?
Ah, look down on the grave ; scrape off the snow ;
Never a man will know who sleeps below.
Let him rest ; let him rest, here all alone ;
Let the winds dirges howl ; his work is done ;
Let the wolves howl at night—howl o'er the snow ;
He hears not ; he cares not ; who sleeps below.

THE MOUNTAIN MEADOWS TRAGEDY.



IN MEMORY of the bold band of emigrants, murdered on the Mountain Meadows by the Mormons.

At daybreak on Monday, September 7, 1857, an emigrant train, composed of one hundred and fifty persons, men, women and children, was attacked by a band of Mormons. Nearly all were asleep, and at the first fire seven were killed and fifteen wounded. They immediately rolled their wagons around them, forming a corral, and strengthened this fortification with dirt, thrown from the center. In this position they suffered intense hunger and thirst for several days; and then John D. Lee, the Mormon leader, came to them with a

white flag. They should be protected, he said, if they would lay down their arms and march out. They had hardly left their corral when the Mormons, some of whom were dressed as Indians, fell upon them and murdered, with the exception of a few young children, the whole band.

Sweet Muses from the plain of heaven,
Let inspiration now be given;
Down, on the stars soft ray of light,
Speak to me, through the gloom of night;
For there is done a deed so dark,
That on black night would leave a mark.
Then give me, Muses, pity's fire,
To stir men's hearts with righteous ire.

While o'er the prairie, throws the sun
His long, thin darts of golden light,

On the far trail, move, one by one,
The wagons, with their covers white.
Each slowly turning, glistening wheel,
Receives the sun's darts on its steel.
The laugh of childhood strikes the air,
And enters, with its sweetness, there;
While maiden's songs, at times, are heard,
The zephyrs hear each lover's word.
While bold men tell of good times gone;
Of days when warlike deeds were done;
And mothers breathe the inward prayer,
That asks for blessings on all there;
They move along, till dies the day,
And night's a barrier in their way.

These emigrants, from Eastern lands,
Now stop to rest their weary bands.
The horses loosed upon the green;

The camp-fire's rising smoke is seen.
The evening meal, the fires prepare;
And while all work, songs break the air;
Songs that send memory back to roam
And brood o'er an abandoned home.

Now snow-like sleep falls down from heaven;
That kindest gift to man that's given.

In a lone wood, not far from there,
Low whisperings rend the silent air;
For there has come a Mormon band,
And murderous steel gleams in each hand;
And they sleep not; but cast away
This gift of sleep, and make night day
With burning torches, whose hot flame
Burns up the night, that bears not blame.
And as they whisper, shades of trees,

That waver in the chilly breeze,
Hear their cold words, and fearing shiver;—
Such words would freeze a Summer's river.
Now by the torch's flickering gleam,
Read in yon eye what demon's dream;
And hear his voice, that prison's sound,
Lest the should wake the echoes round,
Tell how yon band shall die the death,
With daggers that drive out the breath.
Yon band, beneath the mountain sleeping,
What do they dream? The moon is weeping
Down from heaven her tears of light,
To wake those emigrants, this night.
Oh, that those tears would rain a sea,
And drown, on earth, their enemy.

Slow drifts the night, upon time's tide;
Slow creeps the foe up yon hillside—

Their Mormon foe, in Indian guise,
Would murder, when but sleep defies.
Onward they creep, with stealthy tread,
Like ghouls, that creep o'er graves of dead ;
And coward echoes break the air,
To hide their sounds forever there.
These Mormon men have faces red,
And creep along with Death's slow tread.
Ah, note ye now their savage eyes ?
The adder's thought cold in them lies.
Still on they creep, as serpents creep,
That sting their foes, who helpless sleep.
Now night has fled, from out the heaven,
And dawn lies there, whence night was driven.
Still on they creep, and creep still nearer,
The while the dawn grows brighter, clearer ;
Oh, that yon star, with lingering ray,
Might flame a meteor through the day

And wake each from his darkened sleep,
That seems so death-like, and so deep.
Oh, that the sun, with scorching beam,
Would wake each from his lingering dream!
But no! those fiends, beneath blue heaven,
Commence their work—the word is given.
Then heard ye not that anguish cry?
Angels have heard it, in the sky!
And birds have hushed their songs of glee,
For it has killed all melody.
See! on the Mountain Meadows hill
They rest. Some hands for aye lie still.
A child creeps to its mother's face,
To kiss away the wounded place.
Those bold men raise a barrier strong,
With wagons, that they rush along
And form in circle, round their band,
Determined there they bravely stand.

How wild, the rifles angry roar,
The hills re-echo o'er and o'er;
And echoes mock, with laughing cry,
Each dying wail, like fiends on high.
The foes creep up the mountain side;
Behind tall rocks, their faces hide;
And wait again until the night,
When darkness hides them from the sight.

How slow the hours each pass away,
They're aged hours, this long, sad day.
And stillness, too, rests on the air,
As though Death's form was sleeping there.
Few words are spoken in that band,
But oft is pressed the speaking hand;
And oft is seen the wistful eye,
That hopeless turns for hope on high.

A bloody sun sinks in the west
And leaves with night no peaceful rest.
All sleepless watch the fiery light
Of powder, blazing on the night.
That night seems longer than the day;
So long, it seems the night of death.
No moon sends comfort in her ray,
No gentle breeze brings cooling breath.
The owl comes out, and o'er the earth,
Proclaims man's doom for ghastly mirth.
At last a beam of morning's light,
Was stolen away, by darkened night;
The lord of light then rose on high
And banished night, from out the sky.
Three weary days wear slow along.
No sound is heard, but bullet's song—
Unless ye hear the gasping breath
Of those that lie in arms of death.

But oh, deep gloom and dark despair,
From all the world, had gathered there !
Thirst steals the weary crowd among,
And hides his fire in every tongue ;
Oh for some water, clear, and pure—
But no ! this fire must still endure.
The very clouds, like dust seemed dry ;
And mocking hang so listlessly.
While some watch there, and guard the camp,
Still others dream of dews so damp,
The parched lips cool, the dry eyes weep—
Alas their blessing's but in sleep.
They wake, what heard they in the grass ?
Some say the moaning wind did pass.
They sleep again—a broken sleep,
The watchman's lowest tone sounds deep.
Still time bears off the future of gold,
To hide it in the unseen past.

They hear a stream run clear and cold ;
And will their thirst be quenched at last ?
Why heard they not that stream before ?
Deep anguish strains their senses more.
Two white-robed children seek the stream,
“ So young, so gentle, even this foe,
To yonder stream will let them go.”
Such were the thoughts within that band,
When the babes walked on, hand in hand.
As when the angry lightnings gleam,
That wildly rages through the storm,
Strikes not the sturdy oak’s great form
But two sweet lillies—so they fell.
On every face there does now dwell
A look of horror ; so dark, so deep,
’Twould put all joy for aye to sleep,
Oh, would that now those hearts of stone,
But once for pity’s pang might groan.

But no ! their hearts like ice must be,
That floats upon an icy sea ;
So cold their hearts they will not feel,
Unless ye touch, with points of steel.
Ah, note ye now that truce flag rise ?
'Tis like the star, that in black skies,
Becomes the long lost wanderer's guide.
Now life ! for those who have not died,
The foe hath sworn—the oath is taken,
If arms of steel be all forsaken.

* * * * *

Why grows yon maiden's face so pale ?
The murderers' shout rings in the vale.
Ah, see that knife, gleam in the light,
Like dead men's eyes 'tis ghastly bright ;
And see the babe there gasp for breath ;
'Tis struggling in the throes of death ;
And see yon blood reflect the sun ;

A ghastly deed is this that's done !
Methinks the very winds that pass
Are stained with blood, from off the grass ;
Methinks the very stars, to-night,
Will shed o'er earth a bloody light.
Loud rings the valley, with death's tone,
He's grown a king, with kingly power !
Loud rings the vale with weary groan,
He wears a crown of blood this hour !
Ah, lady, why does in your eye
One drop of staining red blood lie ?
Why does yon father's strained hand still
Hold up that blade of steel so chill ?
A cross rose there, where graves were made ;
Was writ on it : Vengeance is mine ;"
And time hath shown vengeance was thine—
Thou hast repaid !

THE PRISONED CANARY'S COMPLAINT.



AH, this is hard for me to bear,
To sing here all the day ;
For I must sing my mournful song,
Till death bears me away.

Ah yes ! I sing my weary song,
While hours drag on the hours ;
As when the bees a death dirge hum,
In a sweet bed of flowers,

My little heart would break in me,
Unless I sang my song ;
My little song doth comfort me,
The weary day along.

Sometimes I sing, how long ago

I knew a gentle mate,

But that is past ; forever past !

The song is sung too late.

The song is sung too late, ye see,

Because my mate is gone.

I know not where, in the wide world,

My heart-broke mate is flown.

And then my song grows loud, and wild ;

So loud, and wild, ye see,

That then do all the people say

'Tis sweetest melody !

They call it sweetest melody,

These pleading songs I sing ;

These songs sung from a weary heart,

That death is withering.

Sometimes they hang me on the wall,
In prison on the wall ;
And then I watch the sunbeams come,
And down in shadows fall !

In sickened shadows, from the bars,
That close me all around.—
And doth the sun, in shadowed bars,
Fall out upon the ground ?

Then sad must grow, big-hearted men,
That walk about out there ;
I know they mark my little heart
With sadness, everywhere.

These bars mark sadness on my heart ;
Make pain within my eye,
But then I try to soothe the pain
To sleep, with melody.

Sometimes I think that long ago,
I, too, like man, was free ;
Perhaps it is some sweet, sweet dream,
Lost in my misery.

One time I saw, on that black roof,
A bird look down on me.
He hopped about, and stared again,
Then flew off fearfully.

He never, never came again ;
He left me all alone—
Perhaps I'm changed, ah, sadly changed !
And that is why he's gone.

Once, years ago, I begged so hard,
The man to let me free ;—
But then, ye see, I could not speak
In tones as rough as he !

And then I asked a pretty maid
In song, to let me free ;
And oh, I sang so sad, and low,
Her eyes grew sad, to see !

Ah, if that sweet, and dark-eyed maid,
Could tell this tale for me,
I know that then they'd break these bars,
And let me fly out free.

No ! I must sing through long, long years.
Unto the deep blue sky ;
And then must sing a funeral song,
And lay me down and die.

THEY SAY MY WILLIE IS DEAD.



THEY say my Willie is dead now,
The Willie I dearly did love,
And on the white billow, his head now
Is pillowed, and ocean winds rove
And sing a sad dirge overhead,
Over Willie, my poor Willie, dead ;

For they tore my poor Willie away once,
They tore him away from this breast,
And they've left this poor heart that was gay once
In the deepest of sorrow opprest,
For they've killed my poor Willie, ye see,
And they've left all the sorrow with me.

They said my loved Willie too poor was,
And I they said was too young,
Then oh ! all our happiness o'er was,
And our hearts with sadness were wrung ;
And then they did force us to part
Forever—and broken in heart.

My Willie he went to the sea then,
And he left his poor love all alone.
One night—and the dark clouds did flee then,
And the storm in the shrouds loud did moan,
From the yard Willie sank in the wave,
In the cold, cold ocean his grave.

LINES.



A GAIN sweet spring doth kiss her waking flowers.
Calls out the birds, that they with melodies
May wake all drowsy Nature. And now the sunshine
Doth lie upon the earth, there, listening to
The growing grass ; watching the timid bud
Peep from its tiny shell, and blush in all
Its innocence. The breeze of summer comes
Creeping again back to these sweet green valleys,
Whence it was banished by the storms of winter.
Ah ! then was mighty tyranny of Nature !
The rushing floods then drowned the tender flowers ;
And if, in dying, they gave forth a wail,
'Twas never heard—'twas hushed in all their thunder.

Ah ! what a mighty grave this cold-browed Winter
Hath left us here ; and once, methought I saw,
Where bridged rainbows stretched from hill to hill,
Across it wandering the spirits of these flowers.
At night these spirits often ye may see
In airy forms, fleeting in the broad heaven
That hangs above the Golden Gate when sinks
The weary sun. There, in that rose-hued heaven
The spirits of the flowers, that on some far
And dreary mountain hight have died, do go ;
Or, all alone, do on the prairie die ;
Or, in some prison, guarded by rough thorns.
Sweet spring hath sent afar her minion winds,
To chase dark clouds from out the sky—those clouds
That hide the gentle faces of the stars
At night. But yet these silent winds have left
Those lighter clouds that veil the gentle stars,
Lest flowers should envious grow.

Now comes the moon a-wandering through the night,
And up her ladder-beams the fairies climb.
And on old Grizzly's peak cayotes howl
The livelong night, mocking the students' song—
That song that echoes bear away, to hide
Deep in the cave of melody. But hush !
I hear some church bell in yon white-earthed moon
Call out in ringing melody the hour
Marked three o'clock, upon the black-faced night !
Then I'll to bed, and rest worn thought on dreams.

THE WANDERER'S RETURN.



STILL evening claimed the hour, and in the sky
The sun sank down, chased by the night on
high.

I met an aged man upon the hill—

“ Young man, why walkest thou here when all is still,
When work hath ceased, and in yon town is rest,
And men turn home, where some short hours are blest ?
Is it because ambition burns thy heart ?

Then woe to thee ! 'twill wither every part.

Sit down upon this little hillock green,
And hear what one ambitious man hath seen.”

He told his tale ; and as he told it seemed
As if while telling his sad tale he dreamed.

THE TALE.

“ Borne back on dreams are years of long ago,
And on my heart, for every year, a blow
My memory strikes ; and recollections ring
With a dull sound—the sound too soon takes wing.
Cease time thy wandering o’er eternity,
With thy strange band of hours, and days, and nights ;
A moment cease, and show the past to me—
The past, that now but dim-flamed memory lights.
For when a child, I always wished to roam
Upon the main—the daring sailor’s home ;
To climb the mast, when storms howled through the
 night ;
When stars came not, the midnight hour to light ;
While ocean roared, and roared the thundering sky,
And lightnings tore the face of night on high.

* * * * * * *

A youth in years, I left my father’s door—

Cursed be that hour—aye! cursed forevermore!
Night hid me while I crept away from home,
Like ocean's bird to sail o'er ocean's foam.
I left a father aged and lonely there;
A sister, too, and mother bowed with care.
But I was punished. Since then life hath been
A garment filled with burrs whose cut is keen.
But never had my life, from childhood's hour,
Once felt the touch of love's almighty power,
Nor felt the influence of a smile's sunshine,
That with its light might even change hearts like
mine.

Aged men agreed I was a wicked child,
And smiled on me; but scornfully they smiled.
My brow grew dark, a scowl came o'er my face,
No kind words came; none, none my gloom erase.
None? one, yes one—oh God! my heart will break!
Yes one there was, that never would forsake.

Why name her here ! her name is known in heaven.
Too sweet the name, in thought's arms to be given.
How many a day we wandered through the wood,
Where clear streams ran, and round the tall oaks stood.
And when I told the sorrows of my heart,
With flashing eyes she ever took my part ;
And when I told her how, before the light
Of the warm sun had chased away the night
I'd seek some city by the far off sea,
And on the wave, a son of ocean be ;
She raised her eye—her dark and saddened eye ;
I read her thought—and you would ask me why
I leave my home ? Against my country's foe
To fight for fame, or death, that worlds may know
The boy despised, in a country town,
Where none looked on him, but to look and frown.
Upon one morn I left my father's home.
A moment still—I saw the warm light come

And throw cold shadows darkly on the wall.
And as I write, dark shadows on me fall
From out the past. Then to the Inn farewell
I breathed ; where oft, at night, do hunters tell
Their Indian tales—their tales of wild-wood life,
Of stratagem, and of the deadly strife.
I glanced up at the little church's door—
'Twas closed. “ On me ” I asked, “ forever more ? ”
Now forty years, times longest years are past,
And I was back—yes home again at last.
'Twas Sunday morn ; the little church I passed
New faces there—was I then left the last ?
Ha ! Sexton no, I'll not walk in the door,
But stand without, and rest one moment more.”
New voices sing ; even new the songs of praise ;
Not those good songs sung in my boyhood's days.
The old church stood just as it stood of old,
Beneath the trees the shade was just as cold.

But ah ! how small that church—how short the aisle—
As death draws near all things decrease the while ;
And there the seat, where oft my loved one prayed—
Perhaps for me—even me her prayers were said.
I sought the Inn, and hoping, fearing, found,
That it was gone, by time crushed to the ground.
And where were they, those men I'd known of old ?
That told tales there, when Winters' nights were cold,
And smoked their pipes around the landlord's stove,
While smoke, arising, airy figures wove.
Where, where were they ?—My sad heart answered
gone,
Upon Time's breast, all fallen, every one.
And there they slept the silent sleep of death—
A choking sigh here almost stopped my breath.
On, on, still on, I saw the corner stone,
Where oft, a child, my steps had been before ;
And there the green, where often when a child,

The school time o'er; in games were hours beguiled.
Where were they now—those friends of former days?
With death were some, the rest gone many ways.
The air was still, no happy laugh rang there,
All joy seemed dead, and stillness in the air.
The old oak tree was fast decaying now,
And on the ground lay many a withering bough.
And in the street but strangers passed me by,
And glanced on me with curious wondering eye.
“Why was I here?” there strange looks seemed to say,
“Why am I here,” I asked, and moved away.
My home was reached, my childhood's home of old,
The latch was touched, my very heart grew cold.
I trembling dared to look upon the wall,
Where, when a child, the ivy used to fall.
’Twas all gone now, and on the window pane
Lay heavy dust—my hope had ris’n in vain.
Who could it be—his hair as white as snow—

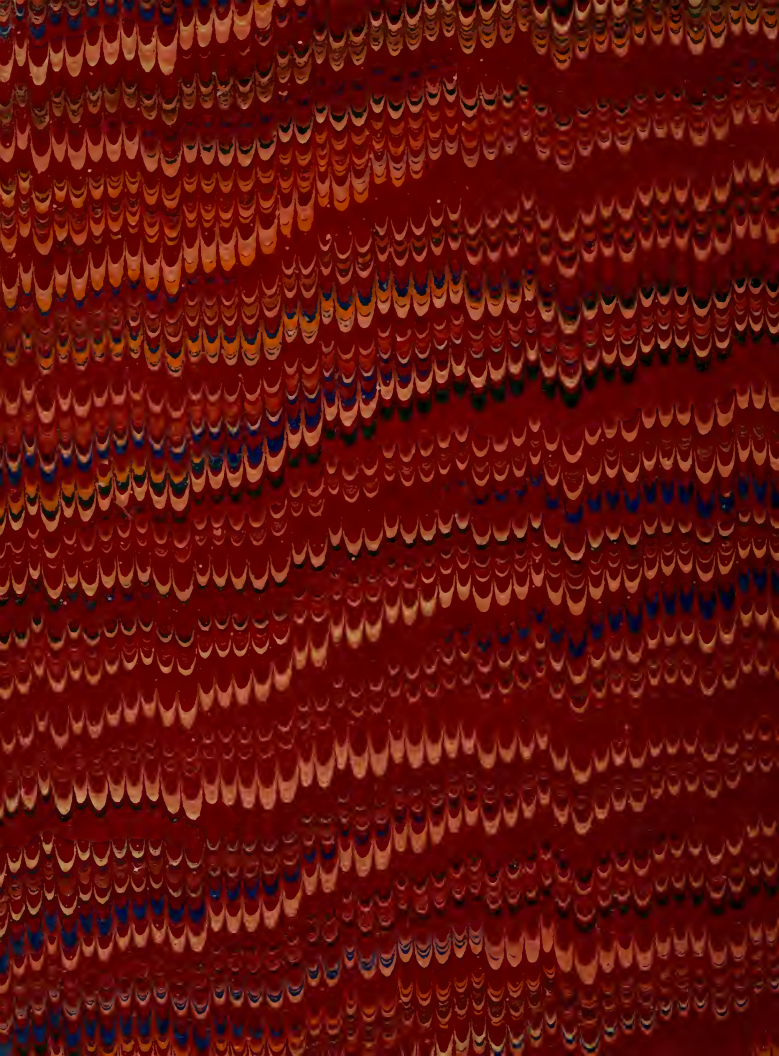
I knew him then, a friend of long ago.
He knew me not. "Oh stranger where are they—
The family that here once made their home,
Still do they live, or hath death writ their doom?"
"The parents to death's home are led away.
A stranger came and won the daughter's hand;
The son a wanderer in some distant land."
And then I asked about that dark-eyed one.
She too was dead, and I was left alone.
"Long years ago, drawn silently and slow
Up yonder hill, the hearse was seen to go—
'Oh say no more," I cried, and sought the stream;
How cruelly came back my boyish dream!
To be a sailor then, my young heart burned;
To be a mourner now, had I returned.
Oh, that she! that she alone were there,
With smiles, to drive away my dark heart's care.
But she slept silently upon yon hill;

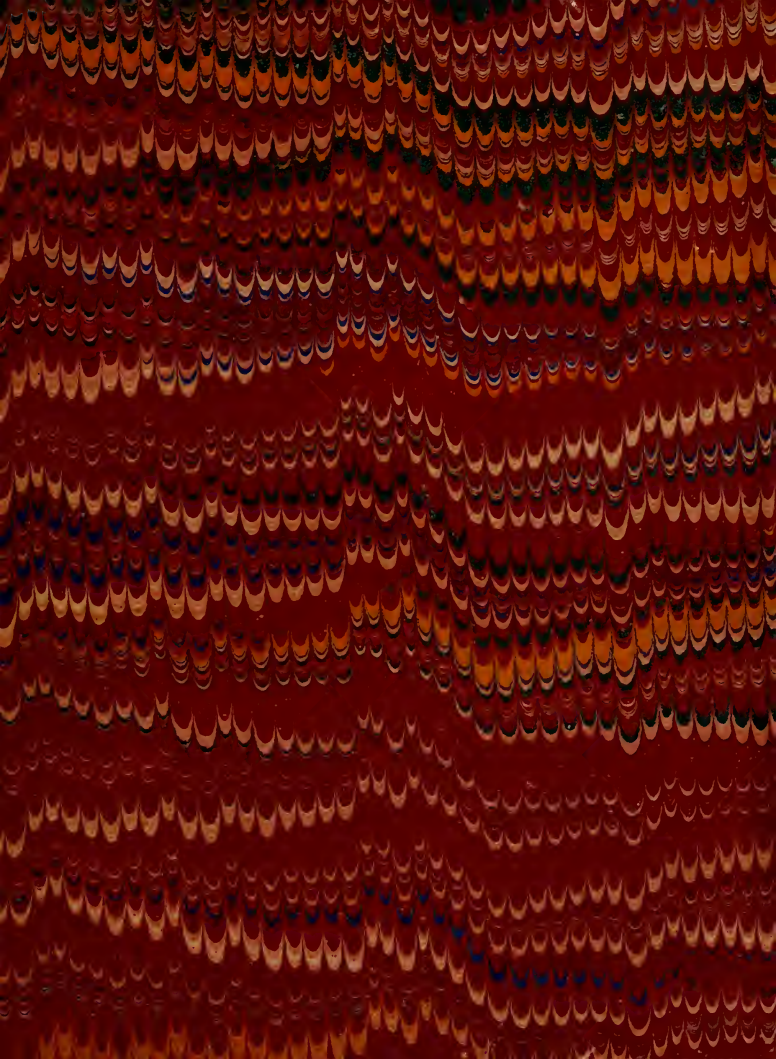
And oh, for aye, her gentle voice was still.
Never again these hills would hear her song,
Nor birds repeat it all the day long.
A picket fence they'd placed around her grave,
And there soft winds now make the green grass wave.
See, now the sun sinks down behind the scene,
And darkness creeps the sun and earth between;
The night will come, and rest here silently.
My heart is dark; the world is dark to me."
The old man ceased; his hands rose to his face,
A tear fell down; earth was its resting place.
A year is past, and now upon the hill
A new grave's made—two hearts for aye are still.



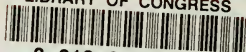








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